ComEd Adopts Plan to Save Customers Half Billion Dollars Through Energy Efficiency

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CHICAGO (RPRN) 11/21/10 — NRDC, ELPC reach agreement with the utility to offset need for new coal plants

An agreement between Commonwealth Edison, environmentalists, and regulators will result in massive savings for ratepayers and potentially eliminate the need for new dirty coal plants in the region. The agreement, inked today, between the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Environmental Law and Policy Center and other parties is a three-year plan to install energy-saving technologies that will save $497.7 million for ComEd customers and 16 million megawatt hours of electricity – that's more power that the Fisk and Crawford coal plants in Chicago generated in the last 3 years.

"This agreement puts money back into ComEd customers' wallets and helps to clean up skies over Illinois," said Rebecca Stanfield, Senior Energy Advocate for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "Energy efficiency is the least expensive and cleanest way for ComEd to meet its customers' energy needs, and that makes it the cornerstone of a clean energy future. The savings can go back into the local economy, rather than being wasted on buying more power than necessary from polluting power plants.

A state law passed in 2007 requires ComEd and other utilities to submit energy savings plans to the Illinois Commerce Commission. The Environmental Law & Policy Center, Natural Resources Defense Council, Citizens Utility Board, the Illinois Attorney General and the City of Chicago worked with ComEd to improve their initial plan, identifying opportunities to increase efficiency and therefore lower customers' bills and reduce pollution.

"Environmental and consumer advocates worked with ComEd and found ways to save a significantly greater amount of energy than proposed in ComEd's original plan," said Rob Kelter, Senior Attorney at the Environmental Law & Policy Center. "This is truly a win-win situation where customers benefit from lower bills and we get cleaner air in the Chicago region."

Under the Illinois law, utilities began with a modest 0.2% of their annual sales being displaced with energy efficiency savings. This standard increases to 1% of sales in 2012, and will continue to increase until it reaches 2% of sales in 2015. ComEd's new 3 year plan to meet these goals will need to be approved by the Illinois Commerce Commission by the end of 2010.

Saving electricity through efficiency is much cheaper than generating additional power and avoids pollution from power plants. Every dollar spent on efficiency saves between two and three dollars that would have been spent on power generation.

Nineteen states have adopted similar energy efficiency portfolio standards, including several Midwestern states (Ohio, Michigan and Indiana) who followed the lead of Illinois.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 1.3 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other

environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Livingston, Montana, and Beijing. Visit us at www.nrdc.org

The Environmental Law & Policy Center is the Midwest's leading environmental legal advocacy and eco-business innovation organization: www.ELPC.org

Media Web Address: http://www.nrdc.org/media/2010/101119.asp

About the author:

Frances Beinecke, NRDC President: NRDC is the nation's most effective environmental action organization. We use law, science and the support of 1.2 million members and online activists to protect the planet's wildlife and wild places and to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all living things.

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